

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 00909 181536Z
ACTION NEA-10

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DRAPER FROM AMBASSADOR PARKER

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PERP PBOR XF LE
SUBJ: AMINE AL HAFEZ

REF: STATE 039671

1. APPRECIATE VERY MUCH YOU AND ROY TAKING TIME TO ENTERTAIN AND
TALK TO HAFEZ. WITH REFERENCE TO PARAGRAPH 4 OF YOUR TELEGRAM,
YOU WILL BE INTERESTED IN READING FOLLOWING, WHICH IS LOCAL PRESS
ACCOUNT OF ATHERTON-HAFEZ MEETING.

2. AN NAHAR, FEBRUARY 16, REPORTS FOLLOWING "SPECIAL" FROM
WASHINGTON, BEGIN QUOTE:

CHAIRMAN OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE, AMINE AL-HAFEZ
MET YESTERDAY WITH MR. ALFRED ATHERTON (ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF
STATE FOR NEAR EAST AND SOUTH ASIAN AFFAIRS).

"FOLLOWING THE MEETING AL-HAFEZ DECLARED THAT THE DISCUSSION
DEALT WITH THE LEBANESE SITUATION, THEN THE MIDEAST SITUATION IN
GENERAL.

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"HE ADDED THAT HE "ASKED ATHERTON ABOUT THE STATEMENT ATTRIBUTED
TO SECRETARY VANCE DURING HIS VISIT TO LEBANON, WHICH SAID THAT
THE PROBLEM OF SOUTH LEBANON WAS "COMPLICATED." HE TOLD ATHERTON
FRANKLY THAT THE WORD ("COMPLICATED") HAD MANY INTERPRETATIONS
AND HAD PROVOKED FEARS IN LEBANESE PUBLIC OPINION, TO SUCH A
DEGREE THAT SOME SPOKE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF THE EXISTENCE OF A

PLAN TO SETTLE THE PALESTINIANS WHO ARE RESIDENTS IN LEBANON;
THAT LEADERS AND PUBLIC OPINION IN LEBANON DEPLORED ANY SETTLE-
MENT PLAN. PRESIDENT SARKIS HAS EXPRESSED THAT CONSENSUS. THE
PALESTINIANS ALSO EXPRESSED THEIR STRONG OPPOSITION TO THE IDEA."

"AL-HAFEZ SAID: "ATHERTON ANSWERED THAT THE U.S. LOOKS AT THE
PALESTINIANS WHEREEVER THEY ARE AS ONE PROBLEM, THAT THE U.S. DOES
NOT DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN THE FATE OF WEST BANK-GAZA PALESTINIANS
AND THE FATE OF PALESTINIANS IN ARAB COUNTRIES OR ELSEWHERE.
ATHERTON DID NOT REFLECT ANY TENDENCY OR INTENTION TO SETTLE ANY
NUMBER OF PALESTINIANS IN LEBANON. THE STATEMENT OF SECRETARY
VANCE DID NOT MEAN MORE THAN EXACTLY WHAT IT SAID."

"FORMER PRIME MINISTER AL-HAFEZ ADDED THAT HE "TOUCHED ON EVENTS
WHICH OCCUR IN LEBANON EVERY NOW AND THEN AND WHICH MAY LEAD TO
RENEWAL OF THE CRISIS." HAFEZ ADDED THAT THE STAGINGS OF SUCH
EVENTS AIM AT CREATING AN EMBARRASSING CLIMATE FOR THE COOPERA-
TING FORCES IN LEBANON, WHICH WORK TO PRESERVE SECURITY AND
RESTORING NORMALITY." HAFEZ INDICATED THAT HE DISCUSSED WITH
ATHERTON ALSO THE SITUATION IN THE SOUTH, NOTING THAT ISRAEL HAD
USED IN THE PAST GUERRILLA OPERATIONS AS A PRETEXT TO STAGE
EVENTS, "BUT WE DO NOT HEAR OF ANY PALESTINIAN MEDDLING AGAINST
ISRAEL, YET THE SITUATION IS STILL BAD."

"HE SAID THAT ATHERTON'S ANSWER WAS THAT HE HOPED THAT THE
LEBANESE GOVERNMENT WOULD SPEED-UP THE REBUILDING OF THE LEBANESE
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ARMY, TO SETTLE THE PROBLEM IN BEIRUT AND THE CLASHES IN THE
SOUTH; AND THAT HE (ATHERTON) EXPRESSED A U.S. WILLINGNESS TO
EXTEND ANY APPROPRIATE ASSISTANCE.

"REGARDING THE M.E., AL-HAFEZ ASKED ATHERTON WHETHER EFFORTS WOULD
LEAD TO A COMPREHENSIVE OR TO A PARTIAL SOLUTION; HE ALSO ASKED
ABOUT A PARTIAL SOLUTION WHILE THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM REMAINS
UNSOLVED. ATHERTON ANSWERED THAT HIS COUNTRY HAD CONFIRMED MANY
TIMES THAT IT SUPPORTS A COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTION.

"SPEAKING OF THE FATE OF THE JOINT AMERICAN-SOVIET STATEMENT,
ATHERTON SAID THAT HIS COUNTRY IS STILL INTERESTED IN EFFORTS IN
COORDINATION WITH THE SPIRIT OF THE JOINT STATEMENT; AND THAT THE
U.S. IS STILL REPEATING ON EVERY OCCASION THAT THERE IS NO SOLU-
TION TO THE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM UNLESS THE PALESTINIANS ARE GIVEN
THEIR LEGITIMATE RIGHTS.

"REGARDING PALESTINIAN SELF-DETERMINATION, ATHERTON'S ADVICE -
ACCORDING TO AL-HAFEZ - WAS TO BE PATIENT WITH THE DIFFICULT
NEGOTIATIONS OPERATION." END QUOTE.
PARKER

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